DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 277 443 JC 870 074

AUTHOR	Tatum, James B.; And Others
TITLE	Presidential Evaluation for Community Colleges. Report of the ACCT Special Committee on Presidential Evaluation.
INSTITUTION	Association of Community Coll. Trustees, Annandale, Va.
PUB DATE	Feb 86
NOTE	23p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Association of Community College Trustees, 6928-A Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003 ($6.00).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Evaluation; *Administrator Role; *College Presidents; *Community Colleges; *Evaluation Criteria; *Evaluation Methods; Trustees; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Community college board members and chief executives alike recognize the importance of a professional approach to the evaluation of a chief executive, but few exemplary approaches can be found among American two-year colleges. Because of the importance of this matter, a committee was appointed by the president of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to study the issues and render a report that would be helpful to boards seeking to create a positive climate for chief executive evaluation. Any presidential or chief executive evaluation is best undertaken when there is a commitment to conduct the process with mutual respect; the board has a desire to enhance the presidency; there is an understanding of the policy-making role of the board and the administrative role of the chief executive; there is a recognition that evaluation takes place in any case and that a structured evaluation enhances communication; and there is agreement regarding the mechanics, format, and standards of the evaluation. Information for a presidential evaluation could be drawn from the following sources: (1) a position description; (2) an annual report presented by the chief executive; (3) an annual audit report presented by an outside auditing firm; (4) reports presented by accrediting teams and state agencies; (5) written reports from the chief executive to the board; (6) observation of the chief executive in a variety of settings; (7) an assessment of the extent to which goals and objectives have been fulfilled; and (8) feedback from all constituencies. Board members and chief executives need to view the process as a tool for improving the institution by improving the climate in which the chief executive will work. A two-page bibliography concludes the document. (LAL)

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Presidential Evaluation for Community Colleges

Report of the ACCT Special Committee on Presidential Evaluation

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PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATION

FOR

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Report of the ACCT Special Committee
on Presidential Evaluation

February, 1986

FOREWORD

Sheila Korhammer, ACCT President at the time, recognized that the subject of "Presidential Evaluation" was not only an important one, but one which needed to be addressed in order that boards and presidents might have some guidance. The committee which I chaired was enthusiastically dedicated to the task. My thanks go to all of the members of the committee who participated as listed below. My special thanks go to Dr. Byron McClenney and Dr. Charlene Curry who provided special assistance with their incisive thoughts and literary ability. Dr. James Evanko provided valuable help with his research and technical assistance.

We hope and believe that the report will be helpful to boards and presidents willing to enter into the process of evaluation with an attitude of "enhancing the institutions" through an improved climate for the Chief Executive Officer.

James B. Tatum

ACCT Special Committee on Presidential Evaluation

James B. Tatum, Chairman
Board Chairman
Crowder College
Neosho, MO

Charlene Curry, Vice Chairman
Trustee
Lane Community College, OR

Ida Baker, Member
State Board of Community Colleges, FL

Charles J. Carlsen, President
Johnson County Community College, KS

Gerald Christenson, Chancellor
Minnesota Community College System, MN

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Frances M. Holland, Trustee
Community College of Allegheny County, PA

S. James Manilla, President
Pima County Community College District, AZ

Byron McClenney, Chancellor
Alamo Community College District, TX

Charles G. Tildon, Jr., President
Community College of Baltimore, MD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Highlights	1
The Report	3
Appendix A - "Checklist for CEO Evaluation".	11
Appendix B - "M.B.O. Form"	13
Appendix C - "Institutions that Submitted Evaluation Components and Instruments" . .	15
Bibliography	17

PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATION
HIGHLIGHTS

Community college board members and chief executives alike recognize the importance of a professional approach to the evaluation of a chief executive, but few exemplary approaches can be found among American two-year colleges. Because of the importance of this matter, a committee was appointed by the President of ACCT to study the issues and render a report which would be helpful to boards seeking to create a positive climate for chief executive evaluation. While the committee produced a comprehensive report, it felt that a presentation of the highlights would be useful.

The committee believes any presidential or chief executive evaluation is best undertaken when the following ingredients are in place:

1. There is a commitment to conduct the process with mutual respect.
2. The board has a desire to enhance the presidency.
3. There is an understanding of the policy-making role of the board and the administrative role of the chief executive.
4. There is a recognition that evaluation takes place in any event and all parties recognize the value of a structured process designed to enhance communication.
5. There is agreement regarding the mechanics, format, and standards of the evaluation.

Information for a presidential evaluation could be drawn from any or all of the following sources:

1. A position description.

2. An annual report presented by the chief executive.

3. The annual audit report presented by an outside auditing firm.

4. Reports presented by accrediting teams and state agencies.

5. Written reports from the chief executive to the board.

6. Observation of the chief executive in a variety of settings.

7. An assessment of the extent to which goals and objectives have been fulfilled.

8. Feedback from all constituencies.

Once agreement is reached regarding which of the preceding items are to serve as information sources , it is important to set aside time on an annual basis to discuss the presidential evaluation.

All parties recognize that the annual evaluation does not preclude the ongoing need for feedback on performance of the chief executive. It does, however, provide a way to focus discussion on the key issues impacting the institution. The use of a simple instrument during this annual process can facilitate communication.

Board members and chief executives need to view the process as a tool for improving the institution by improving the climate in which the chief executive will work. Further, the climate will be enhanced when mutual evaluation takes place between the board and the chief executive officer. Without board self-evaluation, the process of presidential evaluation will not benefit the institution.

PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATION
THE REPORT

Selection of a chief executive and the development of a sound working relationship with the person selected are fundamental responsibilities of a board of trustees for a community college. A decision regarding whether or not to conduct a formal evaluation of performance will have a definite bearing on that relationship, and, given an affirmative decision, the type of process utilized can enhance or detract from the ability of the chief executive to conduct operations of the institution. Given the fact that few if any exemplary approaches can be found among American two-year colleges, it becomes important for all concerned to seek to understand the conditions required to create a positive climate of mutual respect and support through which feedback on performance can be provided.

All who have ever served as trustees or chief executives recognize that evaluation takes place. The decision to formalize a process, if implemented properly, can provide a framework within which discrepancies and minor differences can be corrected before they get out of hand. Communication regarding expectations for performance shared in a spirit of openness can prevent strained relationships and create the climate within which a productive performance review can be conducted.

Among the areas in which it can be helpful to have clear expectations of the chief executive are the following:

1. Formulation of goals and objectives.

2. Program development.

3. Selection and retention of personnel.

4. Planning and maintenance of facilities.

5. Budgeting and fiscal controls, and,

6. Interpreting the institution in the community.

Given clarity in these and other areas, a chief executive can be freed to lead the institution.

Given clarification of expectations and the evaluation of the extent to which expectations have been met are important tools for a board to use in setting direction for an institution. During this process, if there is a conscious effort made to delineate roles of board members and the chief executive, the chief executive will feel free to delegate to others the crucial roles required to develop a healthy institution. A solid basis for evaluation of all administrators is thus created.

When one considers the time, money and effort expended by a board in the hiring process, the concept of developing the president should have great appeal. He or she and the management team assembled should, in fact, be viewed as major assets to be enhanced. The evaluation process itself can be seen as an opportunity for enhancement, although most would acknowledge the potential negative outcomes if performances is not seen as acceptable. All parties involved need to be prepared to deal with any shortcomings with an eye toward professional development of the chief executive. Only when that attitude prevails will it be possible for an administrator to work with confidence to provide positive leadership for the institution.

If it becomes necessary to make a change in leadership, at least the board will be satisfied that it has done its best to work through the problems. While many boards and chief executives oppose formal approaches to performance evaluation, most would acknowledge the possibility of a single crisis situation producing removal from office when there has not been a systematic review of performance. Conversely, systematic evaluation will not prevent crisis situations. It is, however, important to understand the importance of regular feedback on performance. Similarly, systematic discussion of desirable goals provides a chief executive with the clarity he or she needs to perform at peak levels. To be avoided are approaches which become too dependent on elaborate performance standards covering an extensive number of traits.

There should be a recognition that chief executive performance is impacted by board behavior and the performance of a host of others who fill the important roles in the institution. The extent to which there is an understood division of labor between policymaking and administration will also be crucial to the health of the organization. Since delicate balances must be struck, any step with the potential to nourish mutual trust should be explored. An evaluation process conducted with mutual respect can be one of those steps.

While no process can assure mutual respect, the potential is present when the board and the chief executive can agree upon the criteria and the process to be followed. General agreement might

be reached during the employment process thereby paving the way for a mutually rewarding experience at a later time.

Avoidance of an evaluation based on a single negative event should certainly be important to all parties in the process. Abuse from which to start is a clearly defined position description for the chief executive. It will also be helpful if there is clarity regarding the mission and goals of the institution since conflict at this level can create a difficult situation for the chief executive. The resulting "philosophical differences" can short-circuit even the most carefully designed evaluation process.

In addition to the above, attention to such issues and questions that follow is important:

1. Is the chief executive expected to develop an annual report?
2. Will mutually agreed upon objectives be developed for the next year and then utilized in an annual review?
3. Will a measure of the fiscal health of the institution have a role to play in evaluation?
4. Will routine informational reports developed by the chief executive be utilized in the annual review?
5. How is the annual audit report to be utilized in the process?
6. How will accreditation reports and other reports presented by outside agencies be utilized?
7. What will be the role of feedback from constituent groups?

The components which will be included should be mutually agreed on between the trustees and the chief executive, either in the employment contract or at the onset of each interval over

which the evaluation is to take place. If there is difficulty with mutually agreeing on components, the processes and outcomes, and its uses, it is then helpful at times to bring in a consultant or mediator.

The timing and the setting for performance evaluation should also be discussed openly well in advance of the actual event. The issue of whether or not to use an instrument such as a rating sheet should be examined. The evaluation process should normally be conducted during an executive session. Only if it is required by law should it be conducted during an open session. Whatever the decision, it is important for all parties to be in agreement regarding public statements to be made during or after a periodic review of performance. A favorable evaluation of the chief executive can be used as a public relations release to indicate the strong performance and good working relationship of the CEO with the trustees. In addition, a good report card on the college can be presented to its constituents. Further, it is important to have agreement about how the evaluation results are to be used.

Among the potential uses of the evaluation are the following:

1. Professional development of the chief executive
2. Decisions regarding retention or non-renewal of contract,
3. Decisions regarding compensation, and
4. Provision for receipt of feedback from the chief executive about the impact of board activities and decisions.

The latter item introduces the idea of board self-examination at the same time there is an evaluation of the chief executive.

This can be a healthy step if board members are truly interested in enhancing the role of the chief executive as the leader of the organization. (See Appendix A)

The entire process will be enhanced if there has been a clear agreement regarding the areas and objectives to be assessed in a performance review. Typical areas include the following:

1. Community relations,
2. Legislative relations,
3. Educational planning,
4. Budget control,
5. Personnel and labor relations,
6. Management fundamentals and style,
7. Board relations,
8. Relationships with constituent groups,
9. Professional growth, and
10. Strategic planning.

While the list is not all-inclusive, it does suggest key areas in which it may be helpful to develop goals and objectives to be reviewed as a part of an annual process. It should be understood that needs change from year to year. What is important is for the board and the chief executive to develop mutually agreed-upon objectives for the next year in the life of the organization. (See Appendix B)

Each institution has a need to develop its own approach. The Appendix A, "Checklist for CEO Evaluation," was designed as an aid to help the trustees and chief executive start this process.

Appendix B is a typical form that can be used to mutually define objectives, with the last column being used by the trustees in the evaluation process. Appendix C lists institutions that submitted documents that were used as reference material. These institutions should be contacted directly about any specific material that you may desire. Also, a bibliography is included to help those that wish to do their own in-depth research.

The basic essence of the report is contained in such words as; trust, mutual respect, communication, development, positive attitude, responsibility, professionalism, and agreement. If these words are kept in mind during the whole process from beginning to end, a very positive and beneficial result should occur for the chief executive, trustees and their institution.

APPENDIX A
Checklist for CEO Evaluation

I. Are the following General Documents current and available?

Also define if and how each will be used in the CEO evaluation.

A. College Mission Statement _____
B. College Goals and Objectives
   1. past year _____
   2. one year _____
   3. three to five years ahead _____
C. CEO Job Description _____
D. College Annual Reports _____
E. CEO's Personal Reports to Board _____
F. Accreditation Reports _____
G. College Policy Manual _____
H. Budget Summaries _____
I. Trustee bylaws and operating procedures _____
J. Board self-evaluation and orientation procedures _____
K. Current conditions of the college _____

II. Define general use of CEO evaluation.

A. Is it for board use only? _____
B. Will it be used to improve the college? _____
C. Will be used for public use such as public relations? _____
D. Will it be used to satisfy district or state needs? _____
E. Is there any other use for the CEO data at our institution? _____
   If so what? _____

III. Time Frame and Location

A. Will the evaluation be annual? _____
B. Will the evaluation be one held during a designated period prior to contract renewal? _____
C. What is the date of the next evaluation? _____
D. Will the evaluation be during an
   1. open board meeting, _____
   2. executive session, _____
   3. a board retreat? _____

IV. Goals and Objectives for CEO

A. Have goals and objectives been mutually agreed on by the board and CEO in at least the following areas:
   1. Community Relations, _____
   2. Legislative Relations, _____
   3. Educational Planning, _____
   4. Fiscal Planning, _____

5. Personnel and Labor Relations, -----
6. Management Fundamentals, -----
7. Visionary Concepts, -----
8. Short and Long-Range Planning, -----
9. Board Relations, -----
10. Management Style, -----
11. Growth Component? -----

B. Has the activity been defined for each objective? -----
C. Has the measure been defined for each objective? -----
D. Has the time frame been defined for each objective? -----
E. Have the primary and support staff personnel involved for each objective been identified? -----

V. Item importance and CEO Involvement

A. What weight will be placed on
1. Objectives, -----
2. Each General Document used, -----
3. Unforseen Events? -----

B. Will the CEO have input on each item in this check list? -----
If not, on which ones? -----

VI. Communication of CEO Evaluation Results

A. Will it be verbal? -----
B. Will it be in writing? -----
C. Will the CEO have the opportunity to reply to the evaluation? -----
D. Is there a time frame in which the CEO must reply? -----

VII. CEO Outcomes

A. Will it be used for retention of the CEO? -----
B. Will it be used to determine length of contract renewal? -----
C. Will it be used for professional development of the CEO? -----
D. Will it be used for merit increases for the CEO? -----

APPENDIX B

M.B.O. FORM

Page of

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	MEASURE	TIME	PERSONNEL	EVALUATION

APPENDIX C
Institutions that Submitted Evaluation Components and Instruments

The committee thanks all who submitted the many documents to be used as reference and back-up material. A list of those colleges and agencies are noted below with keys of submissions:

KEYS

J - Job Description of CEO

E - Evaluation Instrument

O - Objectives & Goals

M - Mission Statement

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
Washington, D.C. (E, O)

Brookdale Community College
Lincroft, NJ (J, E, O, M)

Community College of Allegheny County
Pittsburgh, PA (E, O, M)

Crowder College
Neosho, MO (E)

Dallas County Community College District
Dallas, TX (J, E, O, M)

Delaware County Community College
Media, PA (E)

Eastern Iowa Community College District
Davenport, IA (J, E, O, M)

El Paso Community College District
El Paso, TX (E, O, M)

Jackson Community College
Jackson, MI (J, O, M)

Kellog Community College
Battle Creek, MI (E)

Kirkwood Community College
Cedar Rapids, IA (J, E, O, M)

Lane Community College
Eugene, OR (J, E)

Maricopa Community College
Phoenix, AZ (E)

New Mexico Junior College
Hobbs, NM (J, O)

Oakland Community College
Bloomfield Hills, MI (E)

Pima Community College
Tucson, AZ (E, O)

Schoolcraft College
Livonia, MI (E, O)

Sinclair Community College
Dayton, OH (O)

Thornton Community College
South Holland, IL (J, E, O, M)

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